

the light in the refrigerator
went out as well, providing
a genuinely zen response
to Alan Watts' koan:
"does the refrigerator light
really go off when
you close the door?"

I ransack the broom closet
hoping for unused bulbs
but find only the
empty corrugated paper
boxes, now flat
and useless.

as the available light
diminishes, we begin
to use fewer rooms,
to occupy smaller areas.

soon we will be limited
to the tiny space
in front of the television
and the bedroom,

the only two places
in the home where
darkness is the
preferred condition.

SOMETHING SPANISH

Classical guitar music
comes out of my f.m. radio.
I am sitting in my office at work
without a thing to do.
There are no numbers
lighting up my calculator.
There are no unwritten pages
on my desk. A round,
well used art gum eraser
sits in the middle of the desk
but I have blown all of
the rubber crumbs away.

I am 33 years old. I
have no work to do today.
I also have no career goals.
I'll be gone in six months,
looking for any kind of employment
in another state. I am
not worried.

A five-day vacation begins tomorrow.
I intend to rest, exercise, and
perhaps do a few simple chores

such as wax the car. Wasting time doesn't trouble me.

Right now
I am among the happiest and
most powerful of men.

LA STRADA

"Give the kids a bath, they're beginning to smell," my wife had said. I didn't believe such beautiful children could smell, but I gave them a bath anyway.

After I got them to bed, I locked up the house, brushed my teeth, put on flannel pajamas, and went to bed myself at 9:00.

It was a great extravagance, as I usually stay up late, typing out poems or catching up on correspondence, but I felt I owed it to myself. I was very tired, my entire body ached with exhaustion. My liver ached, my lungs ached. My heart was tired, my neck was tired. My brain was burning. Every part of me was weary.

I got in under the heavy quilts. It felt good to be in bed on such a cold night.

And I thought about a Fellini film I had seen years ago. It's a wonderfully melancholy work, full of grotesque circus characters, murder, and the tragedy and brutality of life. The great actor, Anthony Quinn, starred as an itinerant strongman who performs feats of strength for crowds in the streets, traveling from town to town on his three-wheeled motorcycle with a gypsy wagon built on the back.

What a genius he was in that film. Grumbling, ill tempered, fiercely proud. A retarded girl tagged along behind him, acting the clown and playing her sad song on a trumpet. She assisted in his performances, but try as she might, she always messed things up. And although she made the audiences laugh, she only infuriated Anthony Quinn.